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# General Assembly

*Official Records*

## Disarmament Commission

**202**nd Meeting
Tuesday, 23 April 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

*Chairman*: Mr. Hoffmann . . . . . (Germany)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.*

**General exchange of views** *(continued)*

**Mr. Hahm** (Republic of Korea): First of all, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission. We are fully confident that your able leadership and broad experience in the field of disarmament will help guide the 1996 substantive session of the Commission to a particularly successful and productive outcome. I take this opportunity to assure you that you can count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation as you oversee the tasks and challenges facing this Commission.

My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau on their election. And, last but not least, I wish to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for his outstanding contribution during last year's session of this Commission.

Each State is vested with the inherent right to acquire arms for its own defence, including arms from outside sources. The Korean delegation believes, however, that international arms transfers must be addressed within the context of maintaining international peace and security and reducing tensions at the international, regional and subregional levels. We are of the view that an enhanced level of transparency in international arms transfers contributes not only to restraining the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms, but also to curbing the practice of illicit arms transfers. In this regard, more effective, progressive efforts should be undertaken by the international community to attract the widest possible participation in the Register of Conventional Arms established by General Assembly resolution 46/36 H.

My delegation feels that the concerted efforts of the international community to establish uniform standards for international arms control and for regulating the exports and imports of arms are essential for eradicating the illicit arms trade, and that the United Nations should play a catalytic role in further enhancing cooperation at the global, regional and subregional levels. In the course of deliberations on this issue during this substantive session of the Commission, my delegation looks forward to working further on the Chairman's working paper on guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H, which will serve as an excellent basis for discussion; we would support all endeavours to successfully conclude a consensus paper.

We now have before us an important issue: the proposed fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. There is no precedent for this: the General Assembly has never convened a special session concerned with the same subject four times. This clearly shows that the international community attaches primary importance to the task of disarmament. While measurable progress has been made in the field of disarmament since the first special session in 1978, the aspirations of the peoples of the world for substantial measures towards disarmament and arms control are stronger than ever.

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In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the fourth special session will provide an opportunity to review the progress achieved thus far and to make more systematic and progressive efforts towards general and complete disarmament in the post-cold-war era. However, careful account should be taken of the timing of the session, the agenda to be discussed and other relevant questions, in order that the special session may bring about meaningful results in this area. My delegation looks forward to useful discussions on this issue during the substantive session of this Commission.

Finally, I should like to touch upon the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones. My delegation is convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is one of the most effective means to bring about a global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the signing of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty on 11 April in Cairo and congratulates all African nations on this historic achievement, which came after 32 years of determined efforts. This momentous Treaty of Pelindaba will undoubtedly make a substantial contribution to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to further strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. My delegation sincerely looks forward to the early and effective implementation of the Treaty.

Another welcome development was witnessed in connection with the Treaty of Rarotonga, which was consolidated last month by the signing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of its Protocols. My delegation is also pleased to note that the Treaty on the South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone was successfully concluded in December last year. These developments give us a renewed impetus towards our common goal of creating a world in which nuclear weapons will be forever proscribed.

Availing itself of this opportunity, my delegation would like to remind all representatives of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which was signed in full agreement by the two Koreas in December 1991. Under the Joint Declaration, both parties pledged not to test, manufacture, produce, receive, possess, store, deploy or use nuclear weapons. They also renounced the possession of nuclear reprocessing and uranium enrichment facilities to further enhance nuclear transparency on the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, the Declaration provides an effective verification regime through the establishment of the Joint Nuclear Control Commission and mutual inspection.

However, my delegation regrets that the Joint Declaration has not to date been implemented. We look forward to its immediate implementation, which will serve as an effective means of ensuring peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you once again, Sir, that my delegation is fully prepared to assume a productive role towards the successful outcome of this Commission.

**Mr. Owada** (Japan): At the outset of my intervention, let me extend my congratulations to Your Excellency, Ambassador Hoffmann of the Federal Republic of Germany, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission for this year. I am confident that under your able guidance, the 1996 substantive session of the Commission will be a particularly fruitful one. I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Japan as you discharge your important responsibilities.

Today I should like to comment briefly on the two substantive agenda items agreed upon so far for this session: first, the issue of international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991; and secondly, the issue of the proposed fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The issue of international arms transfers has long been a major focus of disarmament and security concerns. The question has gained even greater urgency with the eruption since the end of the cold war of numerous internal and regional conflicts stemming from religious, ethnic and racial rivalries. The illicit trafficking in arms, which has been linked to international terrorist activities and drug trafficking, has also drawn considerable international attention, as reflected in the various resolutions that have been adopted by the General Assembly.

The Disarmament Commission has been conducting deliberations on international arms transfers since its 1994 session. The issue is an extremely complex one, since the problem of arms transfers is closely linked to security, political and economic considerations as well as to the legal systems of each country. Since these factors differ from country to country, our task of setting international guidelines is by no means an easy one. Nevertheless, my delegation strongly hopes, Sir, that under your wise and excellent leadership, our intensive

discussion of the subject will yield concrete progress on this vital issue.

As the 1991 report of governmental experts entitled "Ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms" pointed out, international transfers of conventional arms often take place in an environment veiled in secrecy. It is my delegation's view that greater openness and transparency will help to restrain such transfers. I believe it is appropriate in this context to stress the important role that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is playing. My delegation notes with satisfaction that in the three years since the Register was established, the number of participating countries has steadily increased; in fact, as of 12 February this year, 93 countries had submitted reports. This attests to the importance that many countries attach to the United Nations Register system as a global confidence-building mechanism. The Government of Japan strongly hopes that the Register will come to cover arms transfers by all countries, and encourages Member States that have not yet done so to join this system as early as possible.

In this connection, there is an impression that some countries are not at present reporting to the Register. They feel that they do not have to do so, as they have not engaged in any arms transfers for them to report. However, it would be most helpful if such countries could submit what are termed "nil reports", as this would give a clear indication of their political commitment to the Register. I wish to urge strongly that these countries do so, since the registration of such countries is just as important as that of countries with actual transfers to report.

As for the question of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it will be recalled that the General Assembly decided, with the adoption of resolution 50/70 F, to convene such a session in 1997 if possible. In the past, special sessions on disarmament have been held in 1978, 1982 and 1988; they proved highly useful. On this basis, my delegation fully understands the claim that it is time to convene another such conference, after an interval of almost a decade since the last one. The question that we should address is whether the fourth special session is likely to achieve the desired results if it is held at this juncture.

The objective of these special sessions is, of course, to promote disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament. This objective is being vigorously pursued in various forums at the moment.

Bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce nuclear stockpiles are making progress. Also, beginning in 1997, preparatory committee meetings will be held each year to lay the groundwork for the next non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in the year 2000. This review process, to be conducted on the basis of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted at last year's NPT Review and Extension Conference, will certainly cover a far wider range of nuclear disarmament issues and will do so in much greater depth than a special session of the General Assembly could do if it were held at this point.

In such circumstances, it is the considered view of the Government of Japan that such a session would certainly be desirable at a suitable future stage, but that at this stage we should attempt, as a matter of priority, to achieve as much as possible through the ongoing scheduled efforts that I have just mentioned. On the basis of an examination of the results of such efforts, a further thorough exchange of views on the timing, agenda and objectives of a special session on disarmament could more usefully be conducted. I might also add that convening a special session would place a serious financial burden on the United Nations budget, which is already strained.

It was in view of these considerations that my Government abstained in the voting on General Assembly resolution 50/70 F.

**The Chairman:** I can only emphasize the remarks of the representative of Japan on nil reports for the Arms Register, as I have also served on the Secretary-General's group of experts on this subject.

**Mr. Nkurlu** (United Republic of Tanzania): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to join previous speakers in extending our congratulations to you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Our tribute goes also to the rest of the members of the Bureau; we are confident that your leadership will help guide this session to a successful conclusion.

Let me at the outset express my delegation's disappointment and frustration at the failure of this Commission last year to reach a consensus on two important items: "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" and

"Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". This was a major setback in the work of the Commission, considering that both items were poised to contribute positively to international peace and security. We are still of the view that the continued possession of nuclear weapons by a few countries encourages further proliferation of these deadly weapons while at the same time being a major source of instability and destabilization the world over.

The Commission's prolongation of the item on nuclear disarmament in 1994 for an additional year was done on optimistic note with a view to facilitating the success of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). However, contrarily, the indefinite extension of the NPT made it easier for this item to be put to rest, thus conferring legitimacy on the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by a few countries without any commitment to checking qualitative and quantitative proliferation. Efforts in various United Nations forums to achieve a legal instrument for a time-bound framework to eradicate such weapons have been systematically thwarted.

Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have become a menace to our civilized society. According to recent press reports, the threat of nuclear terrorist attack is real. We are told that virtually the entire world is vulnerable to this kind of attack and, on an even more serious note, that it is just a matter of time. The big question which continues to taunt the international community is "when?". Should the world wait until it happens? Indeed, we must endeavour to come to terms with the fact that international diplomacy, and not the nuclear arms race pursued on the pretext of deterrence, is the cornerstone of world peace and security.

It is in this light that the item entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament" affords us yet another opportunity to re-examine the arms control and disarmament machinery and to ensure that it conforms to the realities of the day. We look forward to the convening of the session in 1997 and to addressing pertinent disarmament issues commensurate with the expectations and aspirations of the twenty-first century.

Tanzania recognizes and welcomes the progress made by the United States and Russia towards nuclear disarmament. We urge them and other nuclear-weapon States, however, to go the extra mile and take further strides towards agreeing on a time-bound framework for eliminating those weapons, since the current international environment has rendered them economically burdensome and militarily irrelevant.

In the same vein, we take cognizance of the progress made in the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty taking place in Geneva and of the recent pledge of the Group of 7 and Russia to complete these negotiations by 1996 and have the treaty ready for signature this September. We believe that the conclusion of the treaty will further enhance the process of the disarmament of nuclear arsenals in favour of a peaceful world.

On the item "International arms transfers of 6 December 1991, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H", substantial progress has already been made, and we expect its conclusion this session. The problem of the illicit transfer of arms has brought untold suffering to various parts of the world. The problem has reached alarming proportions, with devastating consequences for human life and property.

In the spirit of international cooperation, major producers of conventional arms, with their advanced technology, should lead the way in curbing the practice of illicit arms transfers, especially in areas fraught with armed conflict. Recipient countries or factions should also refrain from soliciting illicit arms since they bring only misery, poverty, insecurity and instability to the respective areas. We sincerely hope that this item will be successfully concluded during this session.

My delegation regrets the lack of consensus on a nuclear disarmament item for preliminary deliberations at this session. While Tanzania supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the context of regional disarmament, we strongly believe that these efforts ought to be complemented at the global level by the firm political will of major nuclear-weapon States to eradicate these weapons of mass destruction. We therefore reiterate our consistent position in favour of multilateral forums as the best places to negotiate and resolve arms control and disarmament issues.

As you discharge your duties, Sir, we pledge our continued support and cooperation to ensure the success of this session.

**Mr. Abdel Aziz** (Egypt): At the outset, allow me to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to the

chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission this year and to express my delegation's confidence that, under your capable guidance, the Commission will be able to fulfil successfully its mandate for this session. I should like also to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun for his excellent chairmanship of the 1995 session of the Commission.

The importance of the work of the Disarmament Commission has been questioned for the past few years, due to the fact that the Commission has not been able to achieve consensus on concrete results for submission to the General Assembly on the items "Role of science and technology", "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" and "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade".

In my delegation's view, the failure of the Disarmament Commission to achieve consensus on these and perhaps on other topics at previous sessions was due to the lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to achieve any results in our work in the field of nuclear disarmament at a time when the non-nuclear-weapon States stood ready for discussions and compromise. Unfortunately, what was asked by the nuclear-weapon States was beyond any compromise, because it touched on the principles and objectives of our work in the Disarmament Commission, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The status of our current work in the Disarmament Commission is a clear reflection of the global status of disarmament work elsewhere, including on nuclear disarmament. The failure of the last three review processes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was due to the same reason: a lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to take positive steps towards providing legally-binding guarantees to the non-nuclear-weapon States and to commit themselves to the elimination of nuclear weapons within a well-defined time-frame. The lack of considerable progress at the last two special sessions devoted to disarmament, and the fact that the Final Document and agenda of the first special session, adopted in 1978, are still the cornerstones of the work in the field of disarmament, provide vivid testimony to the lack of agreement on how to approach disarmament issues, despite fundamental changes in the political climate in the past few years.

My delegation therefore continues to attach great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission and to its positive contributions in enhancing our disarmament efforts in other forums. We shall continue to oppose proposals made in other General Assembly organs to make the Commission's sessions biennial or to reduce permanently the services allocated to it. The fact that my delegation agreed on the compromise to have the Commission convene its session this year for two weeks plus one day — due to the acute financial crisis of the United Nations — does not constitute any precedent for the work of the Commission, which should return to its three-week sessions beginning at its 1997 session and continue to have three substantive items on its agenda.

In this regard, the third item proposed on nuclear-weapon-free zones, supported by a large number of delegations, will provide an opportunity to revive the positive impact of our work in the Disarmament Commission, particularly in view of the latest positive developments in this regard: the signature by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of the relevant Protocols of the Rarotonga Treaty; the signature in Cairo of the Treaty establishing an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone — the Pelindaba Treaty; and the adoption of the Cairo Declaration on that historic occasion.

The Cairo Declaration emphasized that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially in regions of tension such as the Middle East, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security. It called upon all those States who have not yet done so to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty.

This clear recognition by the African States of the serious situation in the Middle East resulting from the existence in Israel, which is not a party to the NPT, of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and from Israel's acquisition of ambiguous nuclear capabilities, is a clear addition to the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995. We expect that further action will be taken to ensure implementation of that resolution, particularly in view of recent reports indicating possible radioactive leakage from nuclear facilities in Israel.

The signature of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty on 11 April 1996, and the adoption of the Cairo Declaration, marked the first anniversary of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995, on security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons

to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT. My delegation took that opportunity to remind the Security Council of its role in the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments in accordance with Article 26 of the United Nations Charter.

The Security Council, in a statement made by its President on behalf of members of the Council, adopted on 12 April, noted with deep satisfaction the signature of the African Nu lear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and reaffirmed the statement made by the President on behalf of members of the Council at the meeting held at the level of Heads of State or Government on 31 January 1992 that the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction constitutes a threat to international peace and security. We express the hope that the Security Council will be able to take extra measures in the direction of safeguarding the security of non-nuclear-weapon States in accordance with the provisions of its resolution 984 (1995).

Egypt is among the strong supporters of the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our support is based on the need to reflect the fundamental changes in international relations following the end of the cold war and the appearance of a new world order based on cooperation, not confrontation, thus establishing an atmosphere far more conducive to concentrating on disarmament efforts, particularly nuclear disarmament, within a well defined time-frame.

In our work on this topic, we should build on our achievements in the Final Document and agenda of the first special session devoted to disarmament, which constitute models to be followed in our preparation of the results of the fourth special session. Particular reference should be made in this regard to paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session, which states that:

> "Priorities in disarmament negotiations shall be: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effect; and reduction of armed forces". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Tenth Special Session, Supplement No.4 (A/S-10/4), para. 45*)

This is the point we believe we must build on, a point that will require the full positive political will of all parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States.

Some delegations might claim that the time is not right for such a session to take place. We look forward to hearing their points of view and stand ready to respond to them. My delegation will be ready with an open mind to discuss all issues in order to help achieve the desired results and to present our detailed comments in the Working Group.

One final remark on this subject: Our consideration of this topic here in the Disarmament Commission is aimed at revealing trends of thought and arguments with a view to facilitating our work in the Preparatory Committee established under resolution 50/70 F to prepare a draft agenda for the special session, to examine all relevant questions relating to that session and to submit its recommendations thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. It is not intended to be a parallel channel or a substitute for the preparatory work to be undertaken by the Preparatory Committee. Moreover, our work on this subject is aimed, from our point of view, at convincing those who have doubts about the utility of having a special session devoted to disarmament at this stage, of the positive impact of convening a fourth special session devoted to disarmament in 1997 to review the progress in the entire field of disarmament in the post-cold-war era, especially noting the expected conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty currently being negotiated in Geneva. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm Egypt's full support to the early conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In resolution 50/70 J the General Assembly requested that the United Nations Disarmament Commission expedite its consideration of the agenda item on international arms transfers, with special emphasis on the adverse consequences of the illicit transfer of arms and ammunition. It also requested the Disarmament Commission to study and report on measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms, bearing in mind concrete problems in various regions of the world.

The delegation of Egypt expresses its satisfaction that Working Group II was able in 1995 to achieve notable progress on the scope, structure and elements of draft guidelines for international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. Meanwhile, we still hold the view that the draft guidelines do not contain a clear cut distinction between licit and illicit arms transfers, particularly in view of the complex process of identifying the ultimate recipients of arms.

One of the major questions to be addressed by Working Group I at this session is the legitimate right of peoples under occupation or foreign domination to acquire arms in their struggle to achieve independence and self-determination. This should be clearly distinguished from illicit arms transfers to terrorist groups, which have different objectives. My delegation will take active part in the endeavours of Working Group I to finalize the draft guidelines this session, and will present our detailed comments on this issue at meetings of the Group.

Finally, I would like to support the views expressed by several delegations on the need to prepare a standing list of agenda items for consideration by the Disarmament Commission at its future sessions, on the pattern followed by the Conference on Disarmament. The preparation of such a list would prevent the painful negotiating process that took place this year to agree on a nuclear item for the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, for the difference in approach between nuclear States, members of the Non-Aligned Movement and non-nuclear-weapon States was a great obstacle to achieving progress in this regard.

I must register my delegation's disappointment over the serious situation the Disarmament Commission finds itself in: while the majority of Member States support the inclusion of a nuclear item on the agenda, at the moment the lack of agreement by a few delegations is standing in the way.

We strongly agree that the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission should be based on the agreement of all Members of the Commission; but we feel that this position is giving advantage to those nuclear States to block the will of the majority. We wonder whether the Commission should allow one or a few delegations to decide whether to have or not to have a specific item that has been agreed by the majority; and we wonder, moreover, whether we should consider further the procedures adopted in 1994, in order to prevent the recurrence of such situations.

We hope that the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission will be a turning-point towards the positive side. We shall cooperate fully with you, Mr. Chairman, and with the Chairmen of the Working Groups in order to achieve our desired results.

**Mr. Poernomo** (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, Sir, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your unanimous election to preside over the Disarmament Commission. We have every confidence that your able leadership and broad experience in the field of disarmament will help to guide the 1996 substantive session of the Commission to a particularly successful and productive outcome. I should like also to extend our sincere gratitude to the representative of Mongolia for the successful way in which he chaired the Disarmament Commission last year.

During the past year, some encouraging developments have taken place in arms limitation and disarmament. Last December, the leaders of the 10 South-East Asian States met at the Fourth Summit Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in Bangkok, and signed the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Concurrently, the leaders of ASEAN unanimously called for the recognition of this region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Of exceptional importance is the Cairo Declaration of 11 April 1996, adopted on the occasion of the signature of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the continent of Africa. These are both building blocks in our continuing endeavours for a denuclearized global order.

Though now behind schedule, there are indications that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament for a ban on nuclear tests can still be completed for submission to the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

On the negative side, however, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START II) is yet to be implemented, and the pursuit of further deep cuts in nuclear armaments is yet to begin. Meanwhile, the technological sophistication of weapons has grown unabated.

As regards agenda items, my delegation has in the past expressed its views in this forum on the question of international arms transfers. Hence, it is hardly necessary to reiterate them. Suffice it to note that an approach to this complex question should be based on four cardinal principles. First, it should be viewed in the context of weapons needed by newly-independent countries to consolidate their hard-won freedom and to ensure their self-defence capabilities. Secondly, they should be regarded as essential components of regional and subregional security and cooperation. Thirdly, efforts at reducing and curbing conventional armaments should be placed within a comprehensive context, focusing on both supplier and recipient countries, rather than on particular

groups of States. Fourthly, the issue of illicit transfers and acquisitions of armaments, especially in conflict-ridden areas, can be dealt with more effectively through control over national production of armaments, as well as import and export policies, coupled with greater coordination at both the regional and the global levels. It is my delegation's hope that our deliberation on this question will lead to recommendations based on consensus.

As far as a fourth special session devoted to disarmament is concerned, its importance cannot be overemphasized, considering that the third special session devoted to disarmament met eight years ago, in 1988. Meanwhile, significant developments have taken place in the field of disarmament, albeit with a myriad of unresolved issues which call for a reassessment of our disarmament agenda and the formulation of new strategies and approaches.

It is instructive to recall that General Assembly resolution 50/70 F called upon Member States to decide on the dates of the substantive session during a brief organizational session of the Preparatory Committee prior to the end of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. It also calls for convening, if possible, the fourth special session devoted to disarmament in 1997.

As far as the organizational session is concerned, Indonesia and other non-aligned countries have stated their preference for convening the Preparatory Committee in July this year. Furthermore, it is my delegation's view that there should be reasonable intervals between each of the scheduled Preparatory Committee meetings so that Member States can adequately prepare for the tasks which will surely face them at the fourth special session devoted to disarmament. There also appears to be a limited time span from the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee to the convening of the special session itself. Hence, it is essential to proceed with all deliberate speed if we are to ensure a successful session resulting in a consensus document.

The determination of the substantive agenda items to be considered at the special session is of particular importance. First and foremost, the objective set out in the 1978 Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, namely, nuclear disarmament and the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, should remain the highest priority and the principal task of our time.

Notwithstanding the significant strides made in limiting and eliminating nuclear armaments, we have not overcome the profoundly negative consequences of the nuclear-arms race unleashed during the cold-war era. It cannot be denied that the continued existence of vast arsenals of nuclear weapons with enormous destructive capacity still poses an unacceptable threat to humanity.

Hence, there is an imperative need to continue to build on the agreements and to transform them into a platform for more determined efforts towards nuclear disarmament, leading to multilateral accords on the elimination of nuclear armaments. In particular, concrete steps are required for the further reduction of strategic arsenals, for stemming the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, for renewed efforts towards the establishment of new zones free of these weapons and for non-use of fissile materials for weapons purposes.

To further the process of nuclear disarmament, it will also be necessary to continue to have recourse to all possible approaches — multilateral, regional, bilateral and unilateral — as well as to all existing mechanisms. In my delegation's view, those are the issues that should be of special concern to the forthcoming fourth special session devoted to disarmament, as they represent a continuing threat to international peace and security.

In this context, we would endorse an agenda with specific components and characteristics. It should include the formulation of basic principles and general guidelines for arms control and disarmament within an overall system of international security that would eventually replace the current nuclear arrangements. We also realize that the agenda should include conventional armaments. While the validity and relevance of regional approaches would be reaffirmed, global approaches should be drawn on as appropriate. Finally, institutional arrangements would have to be reviewed, particularly the obstacles faced in the Conference on Disarmament on nuclear issues and the resulting need for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference.

The agenda of the fourth special session devoted to disarmament would include points — as follows — to reflect the challenges and opportunities of a changing international order: all aspects of nuclear weapons, at both the regional and international levels including, *inter alia*, a cutoff of radioactive materials as a complementary step towards nuclear disarmament, a progressive reduction of stockpiles, a ban on fissile materials for weapons purposes, and multilaterally negotiated

guidelines on the transfer of technology for peaceful purposes; other weapons of mass destruction; an international convention to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; conventional armaments; reduction of military budgets; reduction of armed forces; collateral, confidence-building and verification measures; and the role of the United Nations in disarmament.

These areas, while not exhaustive, offer a wide range of possibilities for a contemporary arms limitation and disarmament agenda.

Before concluding, I should like to refer to the fact that we have only two substantive items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission, while consultations are being conducted among delegations on a third item. My delegation believes that this should neither constitute a precedent nor detract from the importance of the item. We remain hopeful that it will prove possible to agree on a third item. Indonesia has always upheld the integrity and continuity of the Disarmament Commission's practices, and hopes that it will be possible to initiate deliberations on a third item as in the past.

**Mr. Ayewah** (Nigeria): I wish, as all others have done before me, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the 1996 session of the Disarmament Commission. You have the important duty of redeeming the Disarmament Commission from the shock and the aftermath of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as we continue to discuss the burning issues of disarmament. With your well-known diplomatic skill and profound understanding of the subject-matter, my delegation is convinced that under your stewardship the Disarmament Commission will be able to respond to the purpose of its establishment as a deliberative subsidiary organ of the General Assembly open to the entire membership.

My delegation owes a debt of appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for the admirable manner in which he discharged his duties as Chairman of the Commission in 1995. We also seize the opportunity to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Let me, in passing, assure you, Mr. Chairman, that you can count on Nigeria's support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

Fifty years is a relatively short period in history, but not in the life of an individual; in many traditions, a 50-year old human being is considered to be advanced in age and in wisdom. Our Organization celebrated 50 years of existence last year, and this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the first General Assembly resolution, which expressed the resolve of the international community to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Having had these 50 years, we should by now have left behind cold-war disposition and the mind-set of nuclear confrontation. Indeed, the end of the cold war opened a window of opportunity which we have so far exploited only in a limited manner. Unfortunately, we do not have time for interminable discussions, and complications are beginning to emerge in areas in which agreements had previously been or were about to be achieved.

My delegation is aware of some recent and more or less isolated positive happenings in the field of disarmament which may be considered commendable. These developments, however, have not prevented the emergence of security crises in strategic locations and on strategic issues. The disagreement that persists in the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty in Geneva, the inability to achieve a mandate for negotiating a fissile material cut-off, the lack of progress in the area of negative security assurances and the impossibility of moving forward in the discussion of a realistic plan for nuclear disarmament all belie the principles and objectives listed as targets for nuclear non-proliferation and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the light of the foregoing, my delegation considers that this session of the Commission should serve to arouse the international community from the lull and self-commendation that set in at the end of the cold war, and to sensitize it to the fact that humanity is approaching a new millennium. In this connection, we must say that disarmament goes beyond the voluntary disposition of the nuclear-weapon States to disarm, however desirable that may be and the achievements it may well portend. It goes beyond the negotiating efforts of the Conference on Disarmament, which are sometimes sporadic and often lacklustre. It is a subject that concerns all of us, because it impinges directly on the maintenance of international peace and security, in which we all have an interest.

It is therefore very timely for us to begin to talk about a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which we hope will evaluate our successes and failures and chart the way forward. There

is no doubt that we are at a critical juncture in international relations: 50 years of the United Nations, a post-cold-war era that needs a new security doctrine, and the approach of a new millennium. No one can reasonably insist that there is nothing extraordinary about this time to warrant the injection of new vigour into the international disarmament agenda. I am certain that our exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament will result in a consensus on the necessity to review and revive the process of disarmament in anticipation of the twenty-first century.

My delegation is pleased with the progress that we made at the last session under your able leadership, Sir, on the item on international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. We look forward to the successful completion at this session of our work on the subject. Indeed, my Government attaches utmost importance to guidelines and recommendations on matters of arms control and disarmament that are negotiated in this forum, in the Conference on Disarmament and in the General Assembly.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, although not yet a perfect instrument for measuring transparency on the part of Member States, is to us a useful tool for promoting confidence-building and, in the long run, arms control. In a recent study, it was stated that even though the Register was still far from its goal of universal participation, most major importing and exporting States have participated regularly in its three years of operation. It was also noted that the Register would sooner or later become the source of official information that could be used as a legitimate basis for diplomatic discussions at the global level.

We would have thought that this was fair enough and that the steady progress in this area should be further encouraged. However, the arms-exporting nations continue to proliferate exclusive clubs which take unilateral decisions and set their own criteria and codes of conduct for controlling the transfers of conventional arms and dual-use materials and technologies. These exclusive clubs undermine negotiations carried out at the global level and render global agreements of little effect. They lead to abuse on the part of the exporters and to illegalities in international arms transfers. If our efforts here are to bear fruit and yield the expected results on the international scene, such exclusivé clubs must not only be transparent, but must be seen to be so.

Earlier on, I noted that the Chairman has the onerous task of guiding the Commission at this session as it faces the extraordinary problem of finding a third substantive agenda item. There is a seeming paralysis in multilateral efforts on disarmament. The Commission has particularly suffered. It has had the duration of its substantive session shortened two years in a row. Last year, we could not agree on two important items out of three. This year we are even finding it difficult to agree on what to discuss.

At the end of this session, when we have completed work on the two substantive items currently on the agenda, we shall need to find three or at least two new items for the next session. Imagine the difficulties we will then have to confront. We must therefore continue in our efforts to get a third item for the current session for as long as delegations are willing to continue consultations on it.

Let me reiterate that the Disarmament Commission is the only avenue open to developing countries and to non-members of the Conference on Disarmament to give focused attention to disarmament matters and participate in matters that directly concern their security. If the Commission is reduced in importance by errors of omission or commission, that will constitute a disservice to the aspirations of the international community in their justified bid to live in peace and security. As a delegation, Nigeria cannot subscribe to this.

**Mr. Surie** (India): At the outset, I should like to extend warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Commission. The Disarmament Commission is indeed privileged to have an expert as eminent as yourself in the Chair. Our congratulations also extend to the other newly-elected members of the Bureau. May I also take this opportunity to pay a warm tribute to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for his leadership of the Disarmament Commission last year. We welcome his election as Chairman of the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We also wish to congratulate Mr. Chirila of Romania on his election as Chairman of the Working Group on international arms transfers.

The ultimate objective of disarmament is to ensure durable peace and the enhancement of security for all. This basic objective has remained constant through the years, but the approaches and scope of negotiations have changed along with changes in the international political

environment. The two items now on the Commission's agenda for this year, on which deliberations will be focused — "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991" and "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" — are indeed timely. Appropriate decisions on them could substantially contribute to the cause of disarmament and peace.

The question of arms transfers can basically be divided into two categories. One relates to licit State-to-State transfers; the second, to the question of illicit arms transfers. States have legitimate defence requirements related to their security concerns. The question of what constitutes these legitimate requirements involves an objective assessment of national threat perceptions. However, arms transfers need to be transparent and not to aggravate tensions in any region. The establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms seeks to address these concerns by increasing the transparency of such transfers.

The end of the cold war has not led to the cessation of all conflicts. The question of illicit arms transfers has, on the contrary, become a matter of growing concern and is a dangerous and disturbing phenomenon. It is this aspect that we must continue to focus on in our work.

In his message to the Conference on Disarmament at the opening of its 1996 session, the Secretary-General said that the illicit arms trade is a serious threat to national and international security. The impact of the illicit arms trade on the social stability of countries and its destructive consequences — fueling terrorism, destabilizing activities, drug trafficking, organized crime and mercenary activities — are dangers to which all countries are subject today. This is clearly reflected in resolution 46/36 H. Furthermore, at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena, the Heads of State or Government urged States to ensure an adequate body of national legislation to deal effectively with the problem of illicit transfers of arms. They called upon States to cooperate at the international level in the exchange of information on possible ways and means to deal with the illicit transfer of arms.

This question pertains, *inter alia*, to the diversion of arms to non-State entities. Conceptually, due to its inherently clandestine nature, the illicit arms trade does not easily lend itself to the promotion of transparency. There is at present a lack of legal control to minimize or prevent the flow of weapons at the national, regional and international levels. Difficulties in curbing illicit arms transfers are compounded by the lack of an empirical database from which to develop appropriate policies for more effective controls. This problem therefore requires urgent international action. It will require innovative means for international cooperation and consultation to control such transfers. Clearly, the objective of such cooperation must be to eradicate illicit arms transfers through tighter national controls, exchange of information, harmonization of national policies and unequivocal condemnation by the international community.

The Chairman's working paper annexed to last year's report of the Disarmament Commission, which will be the starting-point of our work at this session, provides, in our view, a good basis for addressing the issue. We look forward to finalizing that paper and to achieving consensus on this important issue.

The new agenda item before us relates to the exchange of views on the fourth special session devoted to disarmament and will, *inter alia*, provide a timely opportunity to review the progress in the field of disarmament in the changed post-cold-war context. It will also provide us with an opportunity to identify the issues which will have to be addressed at the meetings of the Preparatory Committee of the special session with a view to facilitating the development of a blueprint for a genuine disarmament plan.

It may be recalled that the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament contained, in clear terms, a Programme of Action with objectives, priorities, measures and stages of implementation. The fourth special session should, in our view, thus review the progress made in that Programme of Action and assess the developments and trends in the disarmament field since then.

The Indian action plan submitted at the third special session outlines a stage-wise methodology leading towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound framework and the building of a new world order based not on militarization and threat, but on scrupulous adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence and the United Nations Charter. It is our expectation that the fourth special session will clearly point the way towards a non-violent world free of nuclear weapons.

The Disarmament Commission remains an important universal deliberative organ of the disarmament machinery. We assure you, Sir, of the cooperation of my delegation in the forthcoming discussions at this session.

**Mr. Gwozdecky** (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the Canadian delegation, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of our full support.

I also take this opportunity to greet the Chairmen of the Working Groups, who can also count on our confidence and cooperation.

Our session could not have come at a better time. At this time last year, the international community was extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely and making the commitment to rid the planet of nuclear weapons. This commitment has since given rise to specific measures, certainly modest but sufficient to demonstrate the will of all the parties to the nuclear debate.

(*spoke in English*)

This year, progress will come in the form of a historic comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, which we are on the brink of completing. The actions of some nuclear-weapon States, whether with respect to START II, their signing of the relevant Protocols of the Treaty of Rarotonga or the recent unilateral disarmament actions announced by France, have given us reason to applaud, to hope and to expect more. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction inches closer to entry into force. In the coming months, golden opportunities exist to do more, for example with respect to biological and toxin weapons. Indeed the agenda is full of opportunities for real progress in dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

But have we any equivalent cause for hope in terms of what we are doing about conventional weapons — the only weapons in fact currently in use, currently killing each hour of each day? One such conventional weapon, the anti-personnel landmine, has been aptly described as a "weapon of mass destruction in slow motion". As we speak, our colleagues in Geneva are attempting to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition or Restriction on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, to increase the restrictions on the use of these weapons. While we hope for a decisive and positive result at that meeting, it is not clear that there is yet the necessary collective determination to seize the moment and deal with these weapons in a manner which will ensure their elimination.

The weight of world opinion has turned decidedly against anti-personnel landmines. Increasingly, humanity is rejecting their legitimacy as weapons of war. More than a dozen countries have taken concrete action to ban their use, and there is every indication that by this time next year the numbers will have grown dramatically.

My delegation would like to encourage this body and the other bodies devoted to disarmament to take up the cause of conventional weapons, particularly the landmines issue, with renewed vigour. Excessive spending on conventional weapons and excessive build-ups of these weapons do more than kill; they fuel tensions, steal scarce resources and hinder good governance. We believe that the issue of conventional weapons is a legitimate and pressing item on our disarmament agenda.

(*spoke in French*)

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, has expressed the desire to see the question of conventional weapons firmly on the disarmament agenda. In a recent statement he called on us to promote assistance for effective development and to encourage countries to reduce their arms expenditures. In this respect, we are of the view that the Conference on Disarmament should resume its discussions on transparency in the sphere of arms, which would correspond to the wish expressed by the General Assembly, including in its annual call for extension and for joining the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and in its resolution on small-calibre weapons, which was adopted last year.

When we discuss the question of international arms transfers and the possible holding of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, we should also consider how to make progress on the conventional-weapons agenda. The document on international arms transfers, which we will complete over the next two weeks, contains a set of concepts which can clarify our work on conventional weapons, both within the context of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, and at the Conference on Disarmament.

(*spoke in English*)

So let's make it happen. The text has many good elements; it does not need major surgery. Two weeks of concentrated effort and a good dose of pragmatism, practicality and compromise should permit us to produce a useful document that will lay some intellectual foundation for our future efforts in dealing with the conventional arms challenge.

(*spoke in French*)

As regards the fourth special session devoted to disarmament, I believe that most of us hope that it will be successful once it is convened. To achieve this the ground must be well prepared and we must devote all our intellectual and diplomatic resources to it. In the short term, there is no doubt that these resources are almost wholly taken up by questions already on the agenda. The programme of work arising out of decisions relating to the NPT is enormous.

(*spoke in English*)

First and foremost, we must work to fulfil the important package of commitments we undertook at the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the NPT last May. Canada sees great value in a fourth special session devoted to disarmament, but perhaps in 1998 or 1999. This would enable us to take stock of the progress achieved in the disarmament agenda and explore the areas of priority for the future, for a new century. In addition to the important substantive work, we need to consider how we can improve the management of the disarmament agenda within the United Nations, particularly the role of the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and this body.

I have already taken too much time. My delegation is ready to go to work. We pledge to work with you, Sir, and to bring pragmatism and compromise to the table.

**Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation congratulates you once more, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. We wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We hope that you will be successful in conducting the business of this session of the Disarmament Commission. We promise you the full cooperation of my delegation.

We are pleased here to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, for his brilliant guidance of the work of the Commission last year.

The Disarmament Commission is holding the 1996 substantive session after a series of developments in the field of disarmament, prominent among them the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Our position as regards that Conference is well known, and the adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Such developments should have implications for the work of the Disarmament Commission, as the specialized deliberative body of the General Assembly in the field of disarmament. This body should be no less important than the Conference on Disarmament; it should complement its work.

It is with regret that we recall that last year the Disarmament Commission was not able to reach consensus on some of the items before it. We hope during this session to reach agreement on the items on our agenda.

In line with the principles and purposes of the United Nations, we wish to curb the excessive production, development and stockpiling of conventional weapons, while taking into account the legitimate and inalienable rights of States to self-determination and to resist foreign occupation. The States that possess the largest arsenals should work towards drastic reductions in the production and possession of conventional weapons, with a view to promoting international peace and security.

In 1978, the sincere efforts of the international community were crowned with success, when the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament was adopted. The lack of agreement at the second and third special sessions should not diminish the importance of holding a fourth. The positive changes that have taken place recently in the international arena have paved the way to holding a fourth special session to review the latest developments in the field of disarmament. We look forward to the convening of that session next year.

My country voted in favour of resolution 50/70 F, which was submitted by the non-aligned countries and which called for the convening of the special session in

1997. We believe that the special session will offer us an opportunity to review the most significant aspects of the disarmament process from a perspective reflecting the current international situation and to mobilize the international community and world public opinion in favour of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

My country attaches special importance to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and hopes that the Commission will reach an agreement in this area. This is a universal necessity and the cornerstone of the objectives of disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. It would also constitute the first step towards eliminating the nuclear threat.

The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament provided for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not exist, taking into account the characteristics of each region, in full respect of the territorial integrity of each State. We are pleased here to welcome the Organization of African Unity's adoption, on 28 June 1995, of the final text of the Treaty of Pelindaba establishing the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which will complement the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga and the Antarctic Treaty. We hope that the Middle East will be the next region to establish such a zone.

In 1968, the Syrian Arab Republic was among the first States of the Middle East to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In 1989, it also called for the Middle East to become a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction within the framework of United Nations efforts. However, Israel responded neither to this call nor to those made repeatedly by the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and summit conferences of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. As the only State in the Middle East to possess nuclear weapons and the only State that has not acceded to the NPT, Israel is the sole obstacle to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

The Eleventh Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held last year in Cartagena, reaffirmed its appeal to Israel to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons and to accede to the NPT, but Israel has persisted in its development and stockpiling of a nuclear arsenal. In view of the universal desire to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, my country cannot accept any Israeli excuse for refusing to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear installations under the full-scope safeguards of the IAEA. Israel should contribute in earnest to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Israel's statement before the First Committee during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly that the nuclear issue should not be addressed in isolation from the peace process is a purely dilatory tactic aimed at side-stepping the priority nuclear question. The peace process in the Middle East is ongoing. Security is attained by removing the threats to it. What justification can Israel have for possessing nuclear weapons while we are engaged in the peace process? The renunciation of nuclear weapons is the true way to safeguard peace and security.

If the international community represented here in the Disarmament Commission is serious about achieving productive results at this session, we expect Israel to be called upon to renounce the nuclear option, to take real and committed steps towards subjecting its nuclear installations to IAEA safeguards, and to accede to the NPT.

We would hope that the international community will see the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East as being of primary importance and that, in the spirit of collective responsibility, it will undertake practical measures aimed at supporting this initiative, which would help bring about a world free from threat and danger, where aggression is renounced and peace is strong.

**Mr. Sukayri** (Jordan): At the outset, I should like to extend my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 1996 substantive session. We are confident that, with your long experience in the field of disarmament as well as your distinguished diplomatic skills, you will be able to guide the deliberations of the Commission in the most skilful manner.

I should also like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for the exemplary manner in which he led the Commission's deliberations at the last session.

As a member of the Bureau, I should also like to congratulate my dear colleagues, the other members of the Bureau, on their election, and assure them all of my delegation's fullest cooperation.

My delegation shares the view of the overwhelming majority of member States in the great importance they attach to the work of the Disarmament Commission. As the only deliberative body of the United Nations with universal membership in the field of disarmament, the Commission is supposed to play an extremely important role in deliberating and recommending principles and guidelines on specific important disarmament issues. The failure of the Commission sometimes to carry out its mandate does not necessarily refer to any inherent defects in its status, but rather to the lack of sufficient time allocated for its substantive sessions and of consensus among member States on specific sensitive matters under consideration. Along the lines of the 1990 document on ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission, we urge member States to consider convening a special session of the Disarmament Commission devoted to a thorough study of ways and means necessary for the review, enhancement and improvement of the work of the Commission.

Given the fact that such a special Disarmament Commission session would be costly, and in view of the current unhealthy financial situation of the United Nations, an alternative option might be considered, to set up an ad hoc committee with a mandate to study ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We regret, as other delegations do, the fact that during its 1995 substantive session, the United Nations Disarmament Commission was unable to reach agreement on two of its main agenda items. We hope that this year the Commission will be able to achieve concrete results.

With regard to the item dealing with international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, my delegation believes that all ways and means should be considered for the eradication of illicit arms transfers. As such transfers are often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, a coordinated multidisciplinary effort among Member States is badly needed. During this session, the Commission is supposed to conclude its deliberations on this item, and we find the elements included in last year's paper presented by the Chairman to be most constructive. They constitute a good basis for this year's deliberations. Hoping to reach an agreement on that basis, my delegation pledges full cooperation and support in this regard.

The new item, entitled "Exchange of views on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament" (SSOD IV), is of great importance, especially at this juncture, five years after the end of the cold war and almost two decades after the most fruitful of the special sessions devoted to disarmament, namely the first. The proposed new special session also comes at a time when the whole agenda of disarmament and international security is being reshuffled in preparation for the next century. We attach great importance to the proposed session and call for its careful preparation, so that it can yield constructive results.

Therefore, it should be made clear on this occasion that the deliberations on this item that will take place in this forum do not constitute a substitute for the preparatory work. A Preparatory Committee must be convened as soon as possible, preferably by the end of this year or early next year, to avoid the pressure of time on the work of that Committee as the special session comes closer.

My delegation regrets that, after all these efforts in the last few months, we have not yet been able to reach consensus on a third substantive agenda item. We believe that the general question of nuclear-weapon-free zones is the best option, and as far as my delegation is concerned, we are willing to go along with any proposal within the scope of nuclear-weapon-free zones. This position is based on our deep conviction that nuclear-weapon-free zones, as a mechanism for regional nuclear non-proliferation, constitute a valuable component of global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and, eventually, nuclear disarmament.

In this sense, we believe that the recent signing of treaties on two nuclear-weapon-free zones, in Africa and in South-East Asia, has been one of the most significant, positive developments in the field of international security and disarmament in the last year. We hope that the States of the Middle East will be able to establish their own nuclear-weapon-free zone, a step that will undoubtedly enhance the ongoing peace process in the region and will also have a positive impact on global peace and security. In this regard, allow me here to remind all Disarmament Commission members of General Assembly resolutions adopted since 1974, the latest of which is resolution 50/66 of 12 December 1995, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

Allow me also to remind the nuclear-weapon States in particular of their responsibilities in accordance with operative paragraph 6 of the resolution on the Middle East (NPT/CONF.1995/32) adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which calls upon them

> "to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems."

Again, Mr. Chairman, we are looking forward to a fruitful and most constructive discussion under your guidance during this session, and we pledge our support and cooperation.

**Mr. Salazar-Monroe** (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): We are pleased that you are with us once again, Sir, this time as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. We welcome your election and that of your fellow members of the Bureau. Through you, I wish to extend my gratitude to Ambassador Erdenechuluun of Mongolia for the work he did throughout the deliberations of this Commission last year.

The delegation of Peru will not be referring to anything new. However, as we start this statement, I should like to hail the Pelindaba Treaty, which was signed on 11 April last in Cairo. This agreement brings us significantly closer to an important common aspiration of humankind: the wish to rid the world of the threat of nuclear weapons and, in general, of weapons of mass destruction. I pay tribute first of all to the States parties to the Treaty, but also to those uclear-weapon States that have signed the relevant Protocols to the Pelindaba Treaty. I am not speaking on behalf of the members of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but I do believe that I can express what is the common wish of all of us: establishing contacts and developing a close cooperation with the Pelindaba Treaty, along lines similar to the cooperation that has already begun with the Rarotonga Treaty.

I was saying that I will not be bringing up any new events, because our current problems are quite enough. On the one hand, the Commission is beset by its past, particularly the successive failures of 1994 and 1995, as a result of which we are not in a position to say that the mandate for which the Commission was established has yet been complied with, and on the other hand because this critical evaluation of the Commission comes at the same time as steps to reform the Organization and specific proposals for this Commission.

It appears to us that the Commission has yet to comply with the mandate for which it was established: to contribute substantially to the search for worldwide disarmament. At the same time, it faces the new challenge of proposing to the international community a comprehensive programme of disarmament for the post-cold-war period.

The Commission's problem has several dimensions. Aside from the strictly functional and organizational ones, it seems to us that the main problem lies in the lack of political will to continue multilateral efforts in support of disarmament in all its aspects.

I have referred, as have most of the delegations that spoke before me, to our experiences in 1994 and 1995. In so doing, my intention was to stress that we must prevent this from happening again. The proposed agenda items are of particular interest to Peru. Without being repetitive, I wish to reiterate, for instance, Peru's interest not only in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones but also in the cooperation that should be established among such zones. The representatives of Peru, at the Review and Extension Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and at last year's session of the Commission, described this possibility in visionary terms in referring to the establishment of an entire nuclear-weapon-free hemisphere.

Similarly, just as the mandate of the Commission is at present taking on renewed relevance, it seems to us that once the bipolar confrontation has ended, the international community as a whole should agree on specific measures to promote disarmament. The proposed special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament quite justifiably has an important agenda. Just as important is the groundwork for the conference: we must state as specifically as possible the concrete results expected of it. I do not think that we should be hasty. Preparatory work for the new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is no less critical than the participation of the entire international community, lest we risk achieving only results that are frustrating or unsatisfactory or that cannot be implemented.

Peru, of course, attaches the special importance it deserves to the question of non-proliferation in all its aspects. It has voiced firm support for the indefinite extension of the NPT and will continue to support this multilateral regime. However, Peru has also drawn this Commission's attention to the danger posed for most developing countries by the trend to reduce the multilateral disarmament and security agenda to the nuclear issue exclusively. For most developing countries, it is increasingly evident that there is an urgent need to make simultaneous headway on conventional disarmament, for the simple reason that conventional weapons are the ones continuously used in the conflicts among and within our countries.

Peru has denounced the unjustified buildup of conventional weapons and the existence of covert processes of such conventional weapons build-ups, which give rise to instability and insecurity. These cases, in our view, should be brought appropriately to the international community's attention for consideration so that they can be curbed and reversed in favour of peace and development.

We hope that this year the Commission will be able to complete its elaboration of guidelines for international arms transfers, in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. This is not an easy task. It would involve effective, non-selective verification and control mechanisms.

I would highlight in particular the value of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Peru believes that this needs to be urgently updated so as to include information on national stockpiles of conventional weapons, on procurement on the domestic market, and on additional categories of weapons. Peru has also maintained that the control of international arms transfers requires cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, which is not currently the case.

The problem is even greater, of course, when we speak in terms of the illicit arms trade, because we are then referring to a criminal activity that all States need to tackle at the national level as well as through international cooperation.

**The Chairman:** I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

I draw the Commission's attention to the following decision of the General Assembly:

> "The number of interventions in the exercise of the right reply for any delegation at a given meeting should be limited to two per item.
>
> "The first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention should be limited to five minutes." *(decision 34/401, paras. 9-10)*

I sincerely hope that in view of the time we have left, statements will be even shorter.

**Mr. Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The South Korean representative said that his Government regretted that the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has not been implemented. This polite statement implies that the Declaration could not be implemented because of my country. My statement is not to respond to the South Korean representative, but rather to tell our side's story — to give a clear picture of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

We proposed to turn the Korean Peninsula into a nuclear-free zone in the 1970s, and requested recognition from neighbouring nuclear States. But our initiative was rejected by the other side.

At the same time, we have learned valuable lessons in dealing with security matters on the Korean peninsula during the past 40 years, *inter alia*, that we cannot settle any security issue with South Korea. Although the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula has been adopted between North and South Korea, it is meaningless as long as United States nuclear weapons are excluded, because South Korea has asked to be under the nuclear umbrella of the United States. As a result, Korea has no say at all on the nuclear weapons deployed in South Korea.

This shows that, as concerns the implementation of the North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the nuclear issue should be settled primarily between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

As for the implementation of the Declaration, there will be no difficulties once the agreed framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is implemented. In fact, we have already fulfilled all the core provisions of the joint

denuclearization Declaration through the implementation of the relevant provisions of the agreed framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States.

**Mr. Hahm** (Republic of Korea): I do not like to be involved in exchanges of rights of reply of this kind. However, I feel compelled to make a brief remark in connection with the statement just made by my colleague from North Korea, which my delegation considers to have been totally out of context.

In my statement earlier, I emphasized the importance of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as one of the most effective means in a global non-proliferation regime. In this regard, I mentioned the adoption by the two Koreas in December 1991 of the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

It is well known to the international community that the Joint Declaration has not yet been implemented because of North Korea's obstructionist attitude. I should like to tell this Commission that the Government of the Republic of Korea is fully prepared to implement the Joint Declaration.

I should also like to take this opportunity to urge North Korea to engage without delay in a bilateral dialogue with the Republic of Korea for the implementation of the historic Joint Declaration.

**Mr. Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, I should like to emphasize that we cannot settle any security matters with the South Korean authorities, which have no prerogatives over their military and no say at all over the nuclear weapons deployed by the United States in South Korea. As the South Koreans have no say or qualifications whatsoever, and at the same time enjoy the United States nuclear umbrella, it is meaningless to talk about denuclearization with South Korea while excluding the United States.

It is our position that we should first primarily settle this matter with the United States. If this is done, then there will be no obstacle to settling the Joint Declaration on denuclearization between our North and South.

**The Chairman:** This concludes our general exchange of views.

**Organizational matters**

**The Chairman:** I want to remind representatives that, as of this afternoon, we will enter the true working mode and have the Working Groups running.

**Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since this is the first time that my delegation is speaking, we wish to join in extending our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship and to express our gratitude to last year's Chairman, Ambassador Erdenechuluun, for his work. We also congratulate the Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups established to date.

I am speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, of which my delegation is the current Chairman. After extensive and appropriate consultations, I wish on behalf of that Group to nominate Nicaragua to the vacant vice-chairmanship of the Commission. We hope that the Commission will accept the nomination.

**The Chairman:** This is welcome news. The Latin American and Caribbean Group proposes Nicaragua as a Vice-Chairman for this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. May I take it that this is agreeable to the Commission?

*It was so decided.*

**The Chairman:** I congratulate the delegation of Nicaragua.

**Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): As members know, the President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui, will be addressing the General Assembly this afternoon on the serious situation in his country. Considering the importance of this issue, we would ask you, Sir, to delay this afternoon's meetings until 4.30 p.m. The delay might also give us the opportunity to hold further consultations on a third substantive item, on which we have yet to agree.

**The Chairman:** I wonder whether it is possible to hold consultations and listen to a speech at the same time. While, of course, we recognize the importance of the President of Lebanon's statement to the General Assembly and everybody is free to attend, I will not reschedule the meetings of this Commission; we are a subsidiary body of the General Assembly and I do not think that we can simply cancel our meetings.

Representatives must recognize that we have very little time this year anyway, so I would hesitate to close down meetings for any reason.

I think that everybody should feel free to attend those meetings that they feel it necessary to attend, but there will be an opportunity this afternoon to take part in the work of the Working Groups of this Commission.

**Mr. Mesdoua** (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to support the proposal made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I do not think that an hour's delay would greatly affect the efficiency of our work this afternoon.

I also wish to inform the Commission that the African Group is pursuing its consultations and will nominate a candidate for a vice-chairmanship by tomorrow morning, at the latest.

**Mr. Rivasseau** (France) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to associate France with the statements of Algeria and Syria. I wish to draw the Commission's attention to the worldwide importance of the statement to be made this afternoon and to request at least an hour's delay in this afternoon's work.

The French delegation is of course able to attend both meetings, but we must consider those that are represented by only one political officer and must choose between the two events. With this in mind, and given the fact that the Disarmament Commission is the only truly universal deliberative body outside the General Assembly that deals with disarmament, I would kindly ask you, Sir, to grant the request that has just been made. I feel that the Disarmament Commission would do itself proud by displaying a little flexibility, on the understanding, of course, that this should not set a precedent.

**Mr. Abdel Aziz** (Egypt): I would just add my voice to those of previous speakers. It has in fact been a tradition of courtesy that, when a Head of State comes to speak before the General Assembly, other subsidiary organs usually tend to allow some time for members to attend such a meeting. This was the case when the President of Italy was here a few weeks ago and when the Foreign Minister of Cuba was here to address the General Assembly. We hope that this case will be treated the same way, so as to allow those delegations that cannot attend more than two or three meetings at the same time to be present, particularly given the profound effects of that serious situation in the Middle East on our work in other forums.

**Mr. Fridegotto** (Italy): I should also like to join previous speakers in supporting the proposal made by Syria and to observe that there is a well-known tradition in this respect that we would like to follow.

**Mr. Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation understands that this afternoon's meeting of the General Assembly is taking place at the behest of the Group of Arab States and that we all recognize the importance of the issues to be addressed. We endorse the usual practice of acceding to such requests and cannot but support most warmly the request that you, Sir, demonstrate flexibility by convening this afternoon's meetings at 4 p.m.

**The Chairman:** All right, then. I am wax in your hands, of course. We will meet in working-group mode this afternoon at 4 p.m. United Nations time, which in practical terms means 4.30 p.m. But please do not make it 5 p.m., because otherwise we might as well cancel the whole thing for this afternoon, which would be inconvenient for the results we want to achieve during these two weeks.

**Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish to thank most sincerely those representatives who supported my proposal. I believe that such a proposal would be accepted in any similar circumstances.

**The Chairman:** So everybody is happy, I suppose. I have one other question to put to the Commission this morning that comes out of yesterday's deliberations: Does any representative wish to propose a third substantive agenda item on which we can all agree? If members so desire, I propose to go into informal session to discuss this immediately following the adjournment of the present meeting.

*The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.*